Mary and Matrimony.

By Cecilia A. Loizeaux.

"I KNOW just how you feel, Dick, but I don't see how it can be helped. When I became engaged to you we agreed that it would have to be a long engagement."

"It's been three years now, Mary, and I call that a long time. And you seem to have no idea of ending the wait at all. You—you aren't forgetting to care, are you, Mary?"

Mary's lip trembled as she looked at him.

"I care as much—more—than ever," she said. "You don't understand. You see, I have been papa's housekeeper since I was fifteen, and I simply can't leave him alone."

"He is perfectly willing, Mary. Sometimes I think he is anxious for you to marry. He doesn't want to feel as if he were in the way of your happiness."

"That's just it!" cried Mary. "Dear old dad! He'd sacrifice his own interests for me any day. I won't have it."

"Mary, how old is your father?"

"Fifty."

"And healthy?"

"Perfectly. We're all proud of our health."

"He's likely to live out his threescore and ten then."

"I hope so, and if you mean that you wish he would die, Dick Lane"—

"Easy, Mary, easy. Personally I'm very fond of your father. That's one reason why I am so anxious to get into his immediate family. But, let's see, unless some unforeseen accident occurs I shall be obliged to wait for you at least twenty-five years." He held up a warning hand as Mary started to speak. "Don't you see that we're no nearer the goal than we were three years ago? Don't wait to find a solution of the problem, dear. Marry me now and we'll solve it together."

Mary rose impatiently.

"What's the use of talking that way? You know I can't. I've thought and thought, but there doesn't seem to be any other way out. Father flatly refuses to live with us—says it's hotter—and I can't leave him. That's why I sent for you. I've made up my mind that it isn't fair to keep you waiting, so I am going to break our engagement." She looked at him bravely, though her eyes swam with tears and her chin quivered.

Dick stared a moment and then began to laugh, which, under the circumstances, was the worst thing he could have done. Mary's eyes began to blaze, and the tears disappeared.

"It's a joke, is it?" she blazed. "Well, it's time it was broken. Here is your ring. I'm sorry for your wasted time, and, since you are so anxious to be married, I hope you will find some one who will have you right away."

She slipped from the room, and not until he heard the door of her room slam did Dick recover from his amazement. Then he laughed again and, putting the ring in his pocket, left the house.

"Poor little Mary!" he mused. "Well, I see that I'll have to get her father to help."

Mary, watching him stride up the street whistling "Mary, Mary, Long Before the Fashions Came," sank into her big chair and wept.

"He wanted it broken! He wanted it broken!" she wailed.

Once admitted to the inner office Dick took the leather chair which Mary's father indicated with his foot, accepted a cigar and lit it.

"Is this a business call or just a visit?"

"Both. I've been up to see Mary."

"Strange. Anything doing? Will Mary marry?"

"She says she won't. In fact, she has just given me back my ring. I say she must, and I want you to help me."

"Of course I can't force my daughter to marry you if she does not want to," grinned Mr. Arnold.

"Yes, you can—if you go about it right. You see"— And he briefly outlined his talk with Mary. Mr. Arnold smoked fiercely while the young man talked, and then they went over a detailed plan together.

When the young man finally left, the elder shook his hand heartily.

"I'll do my best, Dick. Mary's a good daughter, but she'll make just as good a wife, and I'll divide."

That evening Mary came to the dinner table red eyed and white faced. Little by little her father drew the story from her. When she had finished he said: "I'm glad of it, Mary. I never would have asked you to give him up, but I am thankful that you can see for yourself." He did not say what she could see. "And now that it's all over I don't mind telling you that there are as good fish in the sea as have been caught so far. Now, Dick—well, he's so slow! And then—But that's over now, so cheer up, daughter, and 'all in love with some one else.'"

"Oh, I can't ever do that!" wept Mary. "I shall take care of you all my life."

"Tut! Tut! Just put your mind to it and you can do it. I am anxious to see you marry and be happily settled, Mary. Of course I didn't say so, because I could see that you didn't really care for Dick. If you had cared you'd have married him two years ago. But now that he's gone"—

Mary gasped and stooped for her napkin, sitting up again with a red face. Not care for Dick! Perhaps Dick thought that too.

"And, aside from that," went on her father, "I have been engaged to Marian Howard for a year, and I know how you will feel about keeping me waiting too long. Of course I should not think of marrying again while you are with me."

Mary thought she must faint. The room went round and round, and then she heard a voice, which must have been her own, stiffly congratulating her father, heard him say something the words of which she could not distinguish, and then she was up in her own room.

"Oh," she moaned, "what shall I do? No one wants me. Papa is going to marry again, and even he thinks I do not care for Dick. I must have acted terribly for papa to think that. And why didn't he tell me that he wanted to marry? I'd have been glad of it, for then I could have married Dick and would not have needed to worry about papa at all. Oh, it is cruel! And now it is too late. No wonder Dick stopped caring if I acted like that—like they seem to think I have." She sobbed miserably.

"I like Marian Howard. I have always wished I could have her with me. I'd like to live with them, but they don't want me either. Papa has said time and again that such combinations are always unhappy, and so I must go away somewhere."

She sobbed herself to sleep that night after hours of wretched reflection and almost desperate thinking. She did not go down to breakfast, but when she heard her father leave the house she went downtown and drew all of the money which she had in the bank. Then she bought a ticket for New York.

At noon her father, seeing how wretched she looked at dinner, felt like a brute and came very near to spoiling the whole thing. But she slipped away too quickly to give him time to commit himself, and when he was sure she was in her room he called Dick cautiously up over the phone.

"I guess you'd better come over. I've made a beastly mess of the thing," he said. Then he called up to Mary that he had to go back to the office and told her not to sit up for him and cleared out, feeling like a coward.

This was the chance for which Mary was waiting. Hurriedly she finished packing her suit case, wrote an agonized note to her father, and, after dressing herself in the long coat and dark veil which fleeing heroines always wore in the plays she had seen, she let herself quietly out at the front door and reached the car. A young man jumped off the outgoing car, looked at her sharply and then swung up the steps of the ingoing car after her, but she did not notice.

"Was this what her father had meant in his telephone message?" thought the young man. Well, he had made a mess of it.

It was raining by this time—a dreary little drizzle—and when Mary alighted at the union station she would have fallen on the slippery steps had not some one seized the suit case and caught her arm firmly. When she had regained her balance the man did not let go, but slid his grasp down to the cold, wet hand.

"Let me go! What do you mean?" she gasped, and then she knew. She began to cry.

"Mary, Mary, so contrary, come on home again," said Dick gently. "We didn't mean to go so far as this, dear, in our little plot."

"We—our plot! What do you mean! Did you and father fix all this up for a trick? And—and"— To Dick's great surprise and relief she began to laugh. He had expected tears, anger, even rage. And then he began to feel foolish.

"I guess I got just what I deserve. I was blind as a bat," she said. "When do you want me to marry you, Dick. If you can forgive me enough to want me at all? Dick, you didn't think that I had really stopped caring, did you?"

Mary's father was in the drawing room when they got home and came out into the hall to meet them. "We've been out walking," said Dick blandly.

"Yes, I see," said Mr. Arnold, ignoring the suit case and Mary's unusual apparel. "Fine night, isn't it?"

Lacked Something.

"You Germans have no sense of humor," said an American.

"Try me and see," said the German.

"Well," said the American, "you know America is the home of very large things—the highest mountains, the greatest waterfalls"—

"Oh, yes, yes, yes," said the German.

"And our trees," continued the American, "are so tall that in order to see to the top of them one man looks as far up as he can, and another man begins where the first man leaves off and looks up to the top."

"Dot vas no joke; dot vas a fact."

ROAD WORK POINTERS

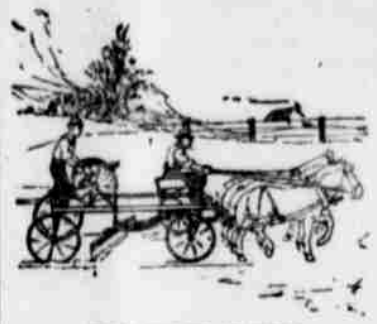
How to Make and Maintain Model Earth Highways.

USE OF LOG DRAG ADVISED.

Beware of Water and Narrow Tires. Says Federal Bureau of Public Roads—Best Implements to Use How and When to Plow.

While American road builders are as capable of constructing good roads as those of any country of the old world they have not been as loyally supported as the men of those countries in maintaining the highways after completion, and the deplorable state of many hundred thousand miles of road is thus accounted for, says a bulletin from the United States office of public roads. County and township officials may at the outset stand the expense of having a road built, but they strenuously object when asked to provide funds to rebuild the road that has been allowed to go to ruin.

It is important that farmers learn of the benefits to be derived from good



ROAD GRADER AT WORK.

earth roads, that county boards be impressed with the need of a proper maintenance of the same and that road builders and overseers learn how best to care for the roads in their charge.

The persistent and powerful enemies of earth roads are water and narrow tires, and the constant effort of the men in charge of the roads should be to guard against their destructive effects and remedy all damage as quickly as possible. The simple implements which have been found to be of greatest assistance in this work are the plow, the drag scraper, the wheel scraper, the road grader and the split log drag.

With a sandy soil and a subsoil of clay or clay and gravel, deep plowing so as to raise and mix the clay with the surface soil and sand, will prove beneficial. The combination forms a sand-clay road at a trifling expense. On the other hand, if the road be entirely of sand a mistake will be made if it is plowed unless clay can be added. Such plowing would merely deepen the sand and at the same time break up the small amount of hard surface material which may have formed. If the subsoil is clay and the surface scant in sand or gravel, plowing should not be resorted to, as it would result in a clay surface rather than one of sand or gravel. A road [illegible]man must know not only what t[illegible]nd what not to plow, but how a[illegible] when to plow. If the road is of the kind which, according to the above instructions, should be plowed over its whole width, the best method is to run the first furrow in the middle of the road and work out to the sides, thus forming a crown. Results from such plowing are greatest in the spring or early summer.

In ditches a plow can be used to good advantage, but should be followed by a scraper or grader. To make wide, deep ditches nothing better than the ordinary drag scraper has yet been devised. For hauls under a hundred feet or in making fills it is especially serviceable. It is a mistake, however, to attempt to handle long haul material with this scraper, as the wheel scraper is better adapted to such work. For hauls of more than 800 feet a wagon should be used.

The machine most generally used in road work is the grader or road machine. This machine is especially useful in smoothing and crowning the road and in opening ditches. A clay subsoil under a thin coating of soil should not be disturbed with a grader. It is also a mistake to use a grader indiscriminately and to pull material from ditches upon a sand-clay road. Not infrequently turf, soil and silt from ditch bottoms are piled in the middle of the road in a ridge, making mudholes a certainty. It is important in using a grader to avoid building up the road too much at one time. A road gradually built up by frequent use of the grader will last better than if completed at one operation.

The foreman frequently thinks his road must be high in the first instance. He piles up material from ten inches to a foot in depth only to learn with the arrival of the first rain that he has furnished the material for as many inches of mud. All material should be brought up in thin layers, each layer well puddled and firmly packed by roller or traffic before the next is added. A common mistake is to crown too high with the road machine on a narrow road.

The split log drag should be used to fill in ruts and smooth the road when not too badly washed. The drag possesses great merit and is so simple in construction and operation that every farmer should have one.

Bathing a Prince.

George IV, while prince and residing in his Brighton palace kept in his bedroom a portrait of Mrs. Gunn, an old bathing woman who used to dip him into the sea when he was the little Prince of Wales. A picture book much prized by children showed the old lady bathing the little fellow. Beneath the picture was this stanza:

To Brighton came he,
Came George the Third's son,
To be dipped in the sea
By the famed Martha Gunn.

A companion portrait to Martha Gunn's was that of Thomas Smoaker, who had charge of the horse which drew the bathing machines into and out of the sea. One day the little royal highness, having learned to swim, swam out farther than Thomas judged to be safe. He called to him to come back, but the self willed boy struck out with more vigor. Thomas went after the prince, overtook him, seized him by an ear and drew him to shore.

"Do you think," he replied to the boy's angry words, "I'm a-going to get myself hanged for letting the king's heir drown hisself just to please a youngster like you?"

Only a Dodge.

An insurance expert was relating in Chicago some oddities of insurance.

"And then," said the expert, "there was that case of the general store man in Ohio. This man's store burned down, and, because his stock was so heavy, the company disputed his claim. I remember one item in his stock list: 17,500 mourning hatbands. When I came to this item I thumped it with my pencil and said to the storekeeper severely:

"'Look here, this is unreasonable. Why should you have had 17,500 mourning hatbands in stock? What possibility was there that death would create in a single small shop like yours a demand for 17,500 mourning hatbands?'

"The storekeeper smiled at me in a condescending way and replied:

"'I didn't keep those hatbands for men who grieved for the death of relatives or friends, but for men who went into mourning for the grease on their hats.'"—Boston Globe.

Misfires of Young Idea.

Air usually has no weight, but when placed in a barometer it is found to weigh about fifteen pounds a square inch.

If a small hole were bored in the top of a barometer tube, the mercury would shoot up in a column thirty feet high.

A right angle is 90 degrees F.

Hydrogen is colorless, odorless and insolvent.

A cuckoo is a thing that turns from a butterfly into a moth.

Horsepower is the distance a horse can carry one pound of water in an hour.

The earth revolves on its own axis 365 times in twenty-four hours. This rapid motion through space causes its sides to perspire, forming dew.—University Correspondent.

MUTILATING STREET TREES.

Park Expert's View on Protecting Them From Electric Light Wires.

C. M. Loring, for long years known as the father of the Minneapolis park system, in writing of the fight for the protection and preservation of street trees in Minneapolis describes a plan that can be adopted by any town. He says:

"There is now a very good understanding between the public service companies and the park board. For a long time there was a great deal of friction owing to the acts of vandalism of companies. In this as in other cities whenever the trees interfered with their wires they would mutilate them in the most outrageous manner, even going so far as to cut down trees that were ten and fifteen inches in diameter. But all of this is changed. The park board had every man arrested who trimmed a tree without a permit, and the court inflicted a good big fine and a promise of imprisonment if the culprit came a second time.

"Now if a tree interferes with the wire a permit is applied for, which is referred to the committee on street trees, and if the tree can be trimmed without injuring it the permit is granted; if not, the company takes some other means of overcoming the difficulty. Usually this is by stringing a cable instead of a number of single wires. Our judges have learned that there is more value in a shade tree than what it would be worth for cord wood, so now after a battle of several years' duration our trees are pretty well protected. A park policeman who was detailed to look after them arrested over 200 for hitching horses to trees before the drivers began to realize that the ordinance would be enforced and that a second offense meant a large fine. Our city is one of the best planted in the country, and we are all proud of our beautiful forest [illegible]"

CENTRALIZING TRADE.

Mail Order Growth a National Menace Reaching Far.

Population Follows Cash to the Big Cities and the Towns Decay—Pertinent Facts Pointed Out by a Student of This Serious Problem.

The centralization of trade in the great cities of the country resulting from the growth of the mail order business is a national menace of far-reaching proportions, says a writer in Maxwell's Talisman.

Population follows trade. If the business is done in the country town and village of supplying the needs of the countryside for merchandise and manufactured articles of all kinds, the people who carry on the trade, the merchant and his helpers will live in the town or village.

If, on the other hand, the trade is done by mail, cutting out the country merchant, the latter is finally driven out of business, his store ceases to exist, his village home is abandoned, and if he should continue in the trade he and his assistants must move to the city and become employees for some great centralized mail trade institution, fitting like cogs into one great wheel, with which they must day after day revolve.

The country merchant, with his self reliance, his sturdy individuality, his broad acquaintance, his knowledge of local affairs and needs, his support for local institutions, his civic usefulness, his neighborly offices, his public services and his co-operation in movements for local improvement, has been uprooted and driven away. There is no one to take his place. The trade that gave him his vocation has gone, and with it has gone the prosperity of the town or village which was his home.

The mail trade has destroyed him.

The village life and the citizenship developed by it constitute the only hope of perpetuity for the free institutions of this country. The most grave and serious dangers that now menace its future result from the overgrowth of our great cities and the consequent degeneration of the average citizenship of the nation.

In the place of the "plain people" whose country environment has made them stable, steady headed, self reliant and independent in action, thought and character we have the volatile city multitude, a floating population, anchored to nothing, either mentally or physically, and blown about by every breeze of popular prejudice or passion—ready for any rash experiment, social or political.

The adjacent village or the nearby town which furnishes for the farmer the social side to his life that the isolation of the farm denies to him is a potent factor in the development of the fully rounded out, broad and patriotic character that makes the American farmer the bulwark of the nation's stability. Not the farmer alone, but the whole life and environment of the community of which he is a part, the country merchant, the editor of the home paper, the preacher, the village schoolmaster, the country doctor and all the men of many vocations who form the village community, bound together by ties of close neighborly affection and friendly intercourse as well as the feeling of mutual regard born of mutual interdependence in their lives, create a social circle welded together by closer personal bonds than are possible among dwellers in cities. The whole circle of citizenship in the country village or town has the same elements of quiet faith in the final triumph of the good and a loyal devotion to country and the principles for which our nation stands as Lincoln declared them on the battlefield of Gettysburg.

The well stocked general store of the country town, which the mail trade would destroy, is a great educational influence in itself, with its variety of goods gathered from many places and supplying many varied needs. The mental interest is awakened and stimulated by the opportunity it gives to see with one's own eyes the thing that will best supply a need and discuss its merits and cost with the merchant or his salesman. The social side of human nature is developed by the personal contact involved in such intercourse, and the trip to town or village to make the purchase is oftentimes one of the most agreeable breaks in the monotony of farm life for the farmer and his family. They meet there a whole circle of friends, whose neighborly greetings give an added cheeriness to the homely happenings of the day. Blot all this out of the farmer's life and you take from it something that has a human and social value that cannot be measured by money any more than family affection can be so measured.

Schools, churches, libraries, social intercourse and entertainments and all that is educational and social in the rural life cluster around the village. It is the social center of the countryside, and it is the trade that comes to it that supports the village or the town.